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# BRITISH SOCIALISM IS DESTROYING BRITISH FREEDOM

*By*

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## FOREWORD

Merwin K. Hart, President, National Economic Council, Inc.  
Empire State Building, New York 1, N. Y.

My dear Merwin:

This brief outline of what is happening to Great Britain under Socialism belongs in a very real sense to you. By this I mean that the pages which follow would not have emerged from my pen without your inspiration and encouragement.

I came to the United States with the somewhat cynical intention of depressing Americans with an objective picture of British Socialism in practice, only to discover that the shoe is very much on the other foot.

In a word, I am bound to take notice of the appalling fact that *politically* your great nation is only a few steps behind Great Britain in its precipitate march down the crooked road that eventually leads to State Paternalism and the Servile State.

It seems to me, therefore, that the great task you have assigned to me possesses an urgency and an importance which are calculated to deflate the stoutest heart. But I do believe, with Burke, that "when bad men combine, good men *must* associate." Individually, we can make only a trifling contribution to this fearful struggle between Good and Evil—for that is what it boils up to—but, in getting together, many of us can face the difficulties and hazards of the fight with relative composure.

Our task is to take our message of liberty and individualism to the man in the street and the woman in the home. Perhaps, my brief exposition may provide a vehicle for this imperative and obligatory responsibility.

One thing is certain. It is later than we think, and in the short time left to us to thwart the powers of Darkness, it behooves all those who believe that the State is the servant and not the master of man to make a final and supreme effort to save civilisation and all its implications.

You, my dear Merwin, have a clear and comprehensive understanding of the things we are up against and I, for my part, count it a privilege to be associated with you in the battles ahead. The real enemies everywhere and all the time are ignorance, apathy and lethargy. It is my modest hope and your generous belief that this necessarily rough sketch of the political and social situation in Great Britain will have a pregnant and current significance. If, also, it helps a little to induce the American public to think once and twice and thrice before it commits itself finally and irrevocably to acceptance of political and economic heresies that have for their purpose the destruction of private enterprise and the dissolution of individual liberty, I would feel richly rewarded for my endeavour.

I am, very sincerely yours,

Cecil Palmer

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DEDICATED  
WITH GRATITUDE  
AND AFFECTION

TO

SENATOR ALBERT W. HAWKES

*a great American, an indefatigable libertarian,  
a fine gentleman, and an incomparable friend.*





Cecil Palmer

## **BRITISH SOCIALISM IS DESTROYING BRITISH FREEDOM**

I am not even remotely guilty of exaggeration in stating that Great Britain today is facing the most dangerous crisis in all her long and illustrious history. She is flirting with the diabolical idea of denouncing Christianity in favour of paganism. Of course, her people as a whole are completely unaware that this is the burning issue. Morally, politically and economically they cannot at present see the wood for the trees. They are sleeping in a Fool's Paradise called Socialism. Only a minute-to-twelve spiritual revolt can save them from waking up in an everlasting inferno called Communism.

It is as bad as that in Britain today. The man who said that the pathway to hell is paved with good intentions may or may not have been knowledgeable. But he was incontrovertibly and profoundly wise. The British people are pregnant with good intentions. What they do not or cannot perceive at this crucial moment is that they are criminally careless about the parentage. For their good intentions, when translated *for them* by third-rate, power-drunk politicians, reveal themselves as the illegitimate offspring of a foreign ideology. If the British people could be made to comprehend even for a split second, the deadly nature of the problem that confronts them, it is my opinion as an Englishman that they would drive the present "powers that be" into the oblivion and disgrace they so hugely deserve.

Unfortunately, the British people are enervated, undernourished, dispirited, harrassed and generally rundown. Two bloody wars in two generations have virtually obliterated the potential leaders of the race and sapped the vitality and vigour of the people as a whole. The Devil's work, in consequence, has been fantastically easy. A people with little hope are greatly helpless. They look *without* for succour, when they should be looking *within* for salvation. When cross-sections, large and small, in a nation see nothing fundamentally evil in such incipient totalitarianism as "Safety First," "Social Security," "Planned Economy," and "I couldn't care less," it is not surprising that the poisonous heresy that claims that man was made for the State is about to become realistically operative.

Great Britain, in short, is heading straight-on for the crooked road to serfdom. How we have sunk so low in human degradation and how far we have already trod the path towards the Servile State, are the difficult and painful purpose of this distressing exposure.



## ***Socialism and Communism Are Twins***

In the first place, let me make it crystal clear that Socialism and Communism are twins. The only operative difference between them is that whereas Socialism merely paralyses the soul of man, Communism utterly destroys it. Contemporary Britain is drinking the poison of Communism out of the cups of Socialism. And there are many cups and much drinking before the fatal dose is administered.

In other words, British Socialism is working itself out to its final communistic consummation by easy and not so easy instalments. In my humble judgment the techniques of the Socialists deserve and demand the serious attention of every thinking man and woman, wheresoever the smallest fragment of Christian freedom remains as an inspiration and as a landmark. If the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, it is equally true that the price for enjoying it is positive, dynamic, personal action in defence of it. The tragedy of the age in which we live, and all the world over, is that the destroyers of liberty are infinitely more zealous and efficient than the defenders of it. By the healthy, competitive processes of "trial and error," which the Socialists have brazenly and cleverly adopted, they have been able to impose Socialism by instalments and *in disguise* on an unsuspecting people. The word or the thing Socialism is seldom *directly* mentioned. Instead, the words "nationalisation" or "planned economy" are exploited as verbal subterfuge, with the evil intent of making the pungent odour of Socialism less repugnant in the nostrils of its intended victims.

If a planned economy is merely a synonym for Socialism in practice, then, without a peradventure, nationalisation is the practical instrument for its implementation. One thing is certain. The present Socialist Government in Britain is using this instrument with fanatical assiduity, despite the fact that each new step in the process of making industry and commerce subservient to politics has been a dismal and costly failure. Nationalisation is political chess, played according to the rules when it is convenient to do so, and played utterly regardless of the rules if, by breaking them, the victim's defeat can be expedited.

### ***How An Industry Is "Nationalised"***

The first move is to set the Governmental propaganda machine in motion and to lay on the poisonous juice progressively until the selected industry itself begins to wonder how it ever came into existence at all. It is coaxed, threatened, cajoled and insulted with equal hypocrisy at every stage. It is told it is inefficient, costly, greedy and quite incapable of working harmoniously with its employees.

When as much as possible of this mud is firmly plastered over the industry, the next move is introduced. The industry is set a minimum pro-



duction target. Even if, left to itself, the industry could attain it, the Government has no intention of allowing it to do so. With their rules, regulations, licenses and permits, the Government already has the power of life and death over almost every private undertaking in the country.

The third move merely adds insult to injury. What is called a "Working Party" is imposed on the now tottering industry. Superficially, it looks fair enough, but, in substance, it amounts to nothing more than a committee of persons, who do not know the business, trying to pass on their ignorance to people who *do* know it. Usually without waiting for the W. P.'s report, another move is inaugurated.

The industry is next asked to rob its stockholders by the limitation of dividends, on the grounds that normal dividends, if distributed, would have an inflationary influence and give impetus to too much money chasing too few goods. The fact that these assumptions are ninety-five per cent fallacious does not worry the Government one little bit.

By this time the industry, from a private enterprise point of view, has "had it." The Stock Exchange prices reflect the situation grimly and graphically. The market quotations go down and down and down. Then, when the Government believes that the break-up price has been reached, it steps in, freezes the current stock exchange quotation as the purchase price for nationalisation, and compulsorily acquires the industry. It is as simple and wicked as that.

The London "Economist," which, more often than not, is a good friend to the present Government, made this comment: "The compensation clauses are as objectionable as ever. Indeed, in the case of steel, they are more so. *To rig the market first and then to make compulsory purchases at the market price is more than sharp practice. It is plain dishonesty.*" (Italics supplied.)

### ***Socialism Is Parasitic***

Nationalisation has a blighting influence on the British economy as a whole. It relentlessly, ruthlessly and fatuously reduces an economy of profit, which is the only economy that makes good sense, into an economy of loss, which makes utter nonsense.

If American and Canadian generosity were withheld altogether, or even drastically modified, I am even more certain than the British Socialist Government itself that it would land my countrymen and women in unthinkable disaster. But even with this external aid, I, for one, see financial chaos round the corner. At present, the losses of nationalisation are being met by the profits of private enterprise. The question that worries me to death is, Where do we go when we have eaten all the golden eggs and killed the only goose which laid them?

It is quite certain that if my country is to be saved, it can be only by



saving itself. There is, perhaps, prophetic wisdom in a somewhat cynical slogan that is "going the rounds" in Britain today. It runs:

Empty heads put them in,  
Empty bellies will put them out.

But, sunk or saved, our climb back to independence and freedom is going to be a herculean task. We can do it even at this minute-to-twelve crucial moment in our affairs, but the cost in "blood and sweat and tears" will be almost unimaginably dreadful.

A certain measure of over-simplification is unavoidable in presenting a realistic balance sheet of over four years of Socialism in practice in Great Britain.

The first thing to be said about it is that so-called practical Socialism is a luxury which no nation on earth can afford to indulge in without asking for trouble, because the trouble with Socialism is that it consumes and destroys infinitely more than it produces and creates. In sober fact, it cannot work at all unless it finds itself in a position to pay Peter by robbing Paul. Its dilemma is, however, that it cannot produce the Pauls. It works only so long as there is something of the past to confiscate or somebody with past savings to rob, or, if those sources and resources do not adequately foot the bill, a few billions of borrowed currency from abroad is not unwelcome, even though it is provided by a hated capitalistic system which the borrowers are so energetically trying to destroy.

The effrontery with which Socialists seriously expect other people to pay the burial charges for their own liquidation is surely the biggest joke of all time. I, for one, cannot believe that all the Socialists all the time honestly believe that they can legislate unsuccessful people into prosperity merely by legislating successful people out of it. And, yet, very recently, the Socialist Chancellor of the Exchequer publicly boasted that there were now only 250 persons in Great Britain's population of approximately 50 millions whose net annual incomes exceeded \$20,000 a year. In passing, I should add that he forgot to mention that the Socialist Prime Minister is one of the lucky ones!

### *When Incentive Is Abolished*

As an individualist I hold firmly to the belief that income and incentive are two sides of one medal. Contrary to the belief held by most Socialists that money is "a meaningless symbol," I accept money as the measure of endeavour and achievement. There are, of course, saints in the world who do and say things without hope or expectation of material reward. They are the saintly few, and I have yet to meet an avowed Socialist among them. Most of us in this wicked world, being of poorer texture spiritually, expect and demand our pound of flesh. We work for money



because the possession of it represents our claim on the goods and services of our fellowmen. The profit motive is as old as the mountains and as immovable in human nature as original sin.

The thinking people of Britain are walking about with grim faces, chiefly because the rewards of endeavour, the glittering prizes of achievement, are no longer attainable.

Socialism in practice begins by soaking the rich and finally stoops to soaking the poor. For example, our \$20,000-a-year man works and thinks for six months in the year *for nothing*. At the other end of the scale, our \$40-a-week man works twelve weeks in the year for nothing. Those lost weeks represent the income tax deducted from salary and wage of two typical types of workers. Directly and indirectly, a spendthrift government is taking the incentive out of income. The economic consequences ultimately must be disastrous for both employer and employee.

All governments, whether right-wing or center or left-wing, have flirted with Socialism during the present century. Socialism as a vote-catcher is nearly a cast iron certainty. It promises nearly everything for next to nothing, to everybody except those who have been marked down to foot the bill. It guarantees all the freedoms, except the freedom from the State itself, thereby making nonsense of its own pretensions.

Nationalisation has profoundly modified what we used to call with some pride, "the British way of life." In the comparatively short space of forty years I have seen many of the indigenous characteristics of the British people bend and crack and break under the strains and stresses of a foreign ideology. And what have we got to show for it? Are we happier? Are we better off? Are we adding to the grandeur and the glory of much of our past? Are we, in short, adding to the spiritual and material wealth of our inheritance? I am afraid the answers to all these questions are in the negative. What have we got to show for our experiments in doctrinaire Socialism?

A nation living beyond its means living partly on past treasure, partly on foreign though friendly charity, and only very insufficiently on current production.

Are we happier? We are nearly the most miserable people on earth—frustrated, regimented, undernourished and forced by rules and regulations which not even Parliament itself has either debated or approved—to do or not to do according to the dictates of a paternalistic State. Our respect for the law has dwindled into nothingness. In greater or less degree we in Britain are all criminals now. A strictly honest man or woman isn't to be found outside a burial ground.

Are we better off? In terms of printed paper money, some of us are, but most of us are not. Organized labour has forced up prices by forcing up wages. And, although they talk and think as though no one else in

the nation mattered a tinker's cuss, the fact remains that they do not even represent the great majority by any standards of democracy that would be acceptable to a civilised community.

I state without fear of honest contradiction, that we were better off and better fed during the war than during any period of nearly four years of Socialism in practice which we have so far endured. The British people, under Socialism, are expected to work "all out" on the following weekly rations: eggs, average  $1\frac{1}{2}$ ; butter, 3 ounces; margarine, 6 ounces; lard, 1 ounce; cheese, 1 ounce; bacon, 1 ounce; sugar, 8 ounces; meat, 6 ounces; cornedbeef, 2 ounces. Our advertising outdoor sites exhibited for months posters bearing the ominous words: "Work or want." If our domestic austerity is carried much farther we in Britain will wake up one morning to read a new poster bearing the words: "Work *and* want."

Are we adding to the grandeur and the glory of our past? If tinkering with the Christian ethic by making sham warfare on atheistic Communism is glorious and grand, then certainly we can be proud of ourselves. There isn't a big man in the whole of the Socialist Governmental set up. They are third-raters dragging down a first-class nation to their own puny level. Theoretically, they know all the answers. Practically, they don't even know the questions.

Are we adding to the spiritual and material wealth of our inheritance? Not a bit of it. Our prisons are full, juvenile crime is a national scandal, our state schools' curriculum is strictly secular and, on the material side, we are dissipating more wealth than we are creating. Having substituted State help, which is dear, for self help, which is cheap, we have lost both the desire and the capacity to save. For the first time for over twenty years the British people as a whole are not only not able to save, but are spending past savings. For the first nine months of the financial year, 1948-49, withdrawals from savings *exceeded* deposits by 72 million dollars. The one institution which continues to spend money as though it were as abundant as water in the Atlantic Ocean, is the State. It has taught the unsophisticated among our people that "the State will pay" and now they do not realize that the State *as the State* is a pauper with a pauper's mentality when suddenly confronted with an opportunity of spending other people's money.

### ***When Government Gets Into Business***

Up to date we in Britain have yet to learn that any socialised undertaking in industry and commerce is paying its way, let alone making a profit. The nationalisation of the railways, for example, cost the nation as purchase price over 4,000 million dollars. It will surely be granted that this is not a bad bit of extravagance for a nation whose Government has had to admit that but for American and Canadian aid Britain would be



confronted with an unemployment problem of at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions, and that her present low standard of living would have to be still further reduced.

The first thing that happened when railways were taken over by the State was an increase in freight rates and passenger fares. At the time it was estimated that the increased revenue would be 260 million dollars.

The Chairman of the British Transport Commission, in an interim statement last November, admitted that railway earnings had increased by only 136 million dollars. He also hinted that for the full financial year the deficiency between income and expenditure probably will be 112 million dollars. Furthermore, if the Railway Unions' claim for an extra \$2.50 a week in the wage packets of every railway employee is granted, the State will have to face an additional expenditure of 80 million dollars a year. If the railmen are happier under nationalisation I haven't noticed it. When I have asked many of them what it feels like to be a part-owner of a train they have most disobligingly told me not to be funny. As for the poor customer the traveller his situation is ludicrous. Many journeys he would have made in pre-nationalisation days, he cannot now afford to make at all. Holiday resorts in the west of England, for example, are facing bankruptcy simply because the tourist trade on which they depend has been torn to ribbons by prohibitive fares which family men especially cannot or will not afford.

Nationalised coal is yet another example of crazy economics. Never in my lifetime, which embraces all the years of the present century, has coal been dearer or scarcer or poorer in quality. I would guess that we have in dollar value more coal in Britain than America has gold in Fort Knox! The snag is that the miners, under public ownership, are no more disposed to dig it out of the bowels of the earth than they were under private enterprise. In 1938, under private ownership, coal production was 227 million tons. In 1948, the Socialist Government urged its coal-mining "comrades" to achieve a modest target figure of only 211 million tons. They could not, or would not, make the grade. The actual production of  $208\frac{1}{2}$  million tons let down Government expectations by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million tons.

### *Steel Surprises Everybody*

In striking contrast to this result I would mention steel, which, though still under private enterprise, is threatened with a large dose of socialisation. The Government set the steel industry as stiff a target as it dared conceive. In 1938, steel production was roughly  $10\frac{1}{3}$  million tons. Unlike the nationalised coal target which was lowered, the private enterprise steel target was raised to an almost impossible and certainly improbable figure of  $14\frac{1}{2}$  million tons. Fortunately, the relationship between capital and labour in the steel industry is more harmonious than in any

other major industry in Britain. Management and men took their "coats off," and went to it, and produced almost 15 million tons. The Government, in its power-drunk desire to capture "the citadel of capitalism" is determined to disrupt the industry, notwithstanding the fact that it has made an unholy mess of coal which, in the first year of nationalisation, showed a *loss* of 91 million dollars. That disgraceful result came about in spite of increased prices, additional mechanisation, and an increase in the number of employed miners from 718,000 to 726,000.

It is my considered belief that these doctrinaire Socialist theorists could not run a fried fish shop without finding themselves at the operative moment either without the fish or the frying fat and, maybe, without both.

An immense amount of ballyhoo has been put over by the Governmental propaganda machine about its wonderful handling of the unemployment problem. It typifies the palpable dishonesty of its statistics. It claims to have maintained what it is pleased to call "full employment." It has done nothing of the kind, as a commentator in the magazine "Truth" has pungently pointed out in the following quotation:

"An ominous feature of the man-power figures to the end of 1948 was that national and local government services were employing 2,230,000 persons, which is 80,000 above the ridiculously high figure to which the Government said the bureaucracy was to be reduced by the end of 1948. It is worth pondering what this means. Of the total in employment 20,328,000—2,230,000 are on unproductive, if not obstructive, tasks, leaving only 18,098,000 to do the nation's work. That is, for every nine workers there is one official. The figure in the United States is, I believe, about one in 16."

These figures not only mean that 2,230,000 bureaucrats are withdrawn from production but that also the efforts of a large number of them are directed definitely to obstructing the efforts of those who do the work. Withdraw, say, 500,000 from the bureaucracy and the country would get not only the effective labour of that number, but it would also be relieved of the obstructive efforts of a large proportion of the 500,000. There is no doubt, however, that the Socialists are maintaining officials far in excess of what the country can afford not only because they believe a swollen civil service is a good thing in itself, but also because it is a powerful factor in bolstering up the fiction of "full employment." The correct description is, of course, *concealed unemployment*. Conscription in peacetime still further aids Socialism in its hypocritical claim to have solved the vexatious and ever-present problem of unemployment.

### ***The Unredeemed Promises***

At the general election in 1945 the Socialists persuaded an effective minority of the *voting* electorate that under Socialism they could settle



the housing problem in a fortnight, come to a permanent understanding with Russia, preserve a free and unfettered democracy, and provide social security from the cradle to the grave. The short answer to all these promissory I. O. U.'s is that they are still unredeemed. The housing problem in Britain has been and still is a national disgrace. There is an acute shortage of both houses and flats and the cost of them when built is preposterous and the quality deplorable. Having shackled the private enterprise builder in favour of local authority building, the whole mechanics of house construction is out of gear and out of focus. Home ownership is severely frowned upon. Houses for weekly rental are the order of the day. When the National Savings Committee issued a poster depicting a happy house-owner, with the obvious implication that thrift had payed for it, the present Socialist Government insisted on its immediate withdrawal. Similarly, in their relationships with Russia they have proved themselves to be incapable of even holding their own, much less making any tangible advance towards mutual understanding.

I do not blame them in this instance for their failure. I blame them for their cocky boasting that they could do so much better than the men whose political positions they were destined to occupy.

As for preserving a free and unfettered democracy, the present Socialist Government has almost succeeded in casting it into bondage. By a stroke of the pen they imposed industrial conscription in *peace time* on every citizen of Great Britain between the ages of 18 and 50. All men and women, unless in an exempted category, can be *directed* to work under the Control of Engagements Order, 1947. Britain today, under Socialism, is only a little less than a vast concentration camp.

I, personally, came to the United States with £5, or \$20, in my pocket. The nationalised Bank of England, as agents for the Government, refused me permission to spend my own money and for all practical purposes froze my account. I am bound to add that the American customs authorities were not much more merciful. They demanded three of my five £1 treasury notes as "head tax" and gave me a single dollar by way of "change." I, therefore, walked down Fifth Avenue for the first time with exactly £2 in English currency and a precious American \$1 note! Can it be that Socialism is trying out its hand in America? My guess is that it is and that Americans generally are kidding themselves that "It can't happen here." That's exactly what we British thought a dozen years ago.

### ***Socialism's Cleverest Racket — "Health Insurance"***

Finally, I have left myself inadequate space to expose the totalitarian plot behind the Social Security from the cradle to the grave ramp. It is Socialism's cleverest racket. In the first place, it seduces the people into allowing the State to do for them the very things they should be willing to

do for themselves. State paternalism leads inevitably to State control of the children—and children of all ages at that! Something for nothing does not add up and when the State exploits this kind of crooked arithmetic it is and can be only for an ulterior motive.

The National Health Service now operating in Britain exposes all the sinister implications of this foreign-conceived conspiracy to capture the bodies and souls of men and women and their children in sickness and in health. The nationalisation of medicine is an integral part of the Socialist frame-up. Indeed, it is almost the last link in the chain that is being forged for the eventual Communisation of Britain. All dictatorships that have outlived their growing pains have found it necessary, sooner or later, to coerce medicine into doing their dirty work. I am not suggesting for one moment that Britain's Health Service was conceived in this spirit. Nevertheless, all the necessary machinery is blueprinted for the use and abuse by some future tyrant if one such should emerge. Even today Britain's Socialist Cabinet ministers have taken unto themselves powers and prerogatives which grossly and malignantly overstep the centuries-old established boundaries of our Constitution.

The formula, issued as a Statutory Instrument, and in itself neither debated nor challenged in Parliament, reads as follows:

"Confirmation by the minister shall be conclusive evidence that the powers of the Act have been applied and that the Order lies within the powers of the Act."

A Lord Chief Justice of England, the late Lord Hewart, described this kind of thing as the "New Despotism."

The cost of the State Medical Service in its first nine months working has exceeded the estimate by nearly 234 million dollars, and as the original estimate allowed for an expenditure of approximately 700 million dollars it is not unfair to assume that the aggregate cost per annum will be not far from 1,000 million dollars. Such colossal State expenditure on a *single* item in the Social Services programme would be fantastic at any time. In Britain's present financial situation, it is stark, raving madness.

The Government cannot and has not delivered the goods. There are not enough doctors, or nurses, or hospitals or clinics. The hospital situation is especially acute and it hits hardest of all the poor patient who, under the voluntary hospital system, could always count upon and always did receive priority treatment. I quote a typical letter to the English press from a practicing county-city doctor. He said:

"The dismay regarding the admission of acutely ill patients to hospital, which has been expressed by the London doctors, is felt by doctors throughout the country. Many of us foresaw that this deplorable state of affairs would follow the introduction of the National



Health Service. It was clear to all that the sudden opening of hospital doors to every citizen, irrespective of his income, would overcrowd these already full institutions. Before July 5, 1948, the man of small means had complete priority of admission to a hospital bed—and rightly so. After that date the hospital beds remained the same in number, but the candidates for admission increased enormously. The Socialist Government had come to the rescue of the rich man, and abolished the poor man's priority."

Do the spectacles, dentures and wigs so lavishly bestowed on us (at what a price!) compensate for the distress due to inability to admit people for the necessary institutional treatment? It has all been a revelation of thoughtless and careless hospital planning.

The scheme is a political fraud because it has been foisted on the public as a FREE medical service. It is nothing of the kind. The patients' real and potential, contributions to the Health Service *alone* is 2 million 800 thousand dollars a *week*. If that is a free medical service it would be nice to have an estimate for one that isn't. It might be cheaper. It couldn't surely be dearer.

The State Medical Service has done two things. Firstly, it has revolutionised the status of the doctor. His livelihood, his professional advancement, his loyalties are now at the mercy of the State—the State which pays him with the citizens' compulsory contributions. And, secondly, it has destroyed the relationship between doctor and patient. Privacy and secrecy have gone despite the parliamentary assurances of the Minister of Health. In an official leaflet explaining the new services and issued to all householders in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a categorical assurance is given in the following terms: "Your dealings with your doctor will remain as they are now, personal and confidential." Only a few weeks later the Minister of Health issued a Statutory Instrument, number 506, which flatly contradicted this assurance and created an entirely new position in the Ministry's own relationship with the doctor. Under the heading, "Terms of Service" every practitioner enrolled in the service is required "to keep record of the illnesses of his public patients and of his treatment of them in such form as the Minister may from time to time determine, and to forward such record to the local Executive Council,"—which Council, I must explain, consists largely of lay persons. Women especially are furious about this barefaced breach of confidence. They point out that Mrs. Smith, the patient, living in Block A, discovers to her horror that Mrs. Brown, a member of the Council, lives in Block B with all the possibilities of neighbourly "gossip" about Mrs. Smith's ailments.

From time immemorial, doctors in Britain have voluntarily accepted the Hippocratic Oath as binding upon them professionally. Indeed, it was strictly enforced by the British Medical Association and any doctor



breaking it made himself liable to be struck off the medical register, a punishment that in effect precluded him from practicing. Thus, a doctor's real dilemma has been created. If he abides by his Oath, he must disobey his new master upon whom he is now dependent for his salary. If he disregards his Oath and places his patients' confidences at the disposal of the Minister, he is clearly guilty of "unprofessional conduct."

Under the scheme doctors practising in large areas are called upon to accept 4,000 patients. In smaller areas the number is reduced to 2,500. Each doctor receives a per capita fee of approximately \$3.25 per patient per annum. It has not taken the doctors long to discover that their net incomes, after deduction of heavy expenses and income tax, are totally inadequate and they are now, through the B. M. A., pressing the Minister for a reconsideration of this and other difficulties in the working of socialised medicine.

Furthermore, there is considerable significance in the fact that within a few months of the Act coming into operation a new organisation, under the leadership of Lord Horder, the eminent physician, and calling itself the Fellowship for Freedom in Medicine has come into existence and is being strongly supported up and down the country by medical men who have quickly realized that the high standards of British medicine are in jeopardy.

It has been estimated that doctors today can give their public patients only an average of five minutes per patient for both diagnosis and treatment! The State, on the other hand, claims under the scheme that "it is the duty of the citizen to keep well," and demands from the doctor a willingness to exercise "harsh certification," which, in plain English, means disposing of illness or disability in the shortest possible space of time.

At the beginning of the current year it was reported that there were 57,316 (one-ninth of the total) vacant beds in hospitals simply because there are neither the doctors nor the nurses to service them.

One Cabinet Minister recently told the world that the British were a fine people but that "an occasional crack of the whip" paid handsome dividends. It is my very confident guess that the day is not far distant when the doctors will make the discovery that they are expected to crack the whip! Finally, the late Stephen Leacock perhaps after all was not so greatly wrong when he facetiously observed that Socialism will work only in heaven, where they don't want it, or in hell, where they have got it already!

Cecil Palmer



CECIL PALMER is a distinguished publisher, author and lecturer. He has been heard many times in all parts of Great Britain. He was one of the original 26 signers of the British Individualists' Manifesto published six years ago, and which led to the formation of the British Society for Individual Freedom of which he was, until the summer of 1948, the executive head.

Mr. Palmer has made his first visit to America in 1949.

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ALBERT W. HAWKES, to whom Mr. Palmer dedicated this paper, is well known throughout the United States. He was for many years President of Congoleum-Nairn, Inc., and is now its Chairman; he was President of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States; and was United States Senator from New Jersey from 1943 to 1949.

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